

**D A T**



**Analytics**

# **The New Essentials**

**How to choose  
a data provider  
amidst a  
new shipping  
landscape**

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# A changing landscape

The old rules for procurement and transportation management are fading away. In their place, a new set of rules are being built. Modern shippers are building these rules in real time. If you're not up to speed, you run the risk of getting left behind.

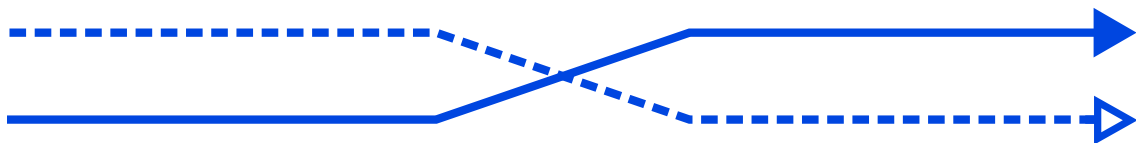
Today's shippers are shifting from a stable, consistent business model to one that prioritizes agility, shorter contracts, and the ability to pivot and ride the market's waves as they come.

Of course, surfing the market's waves takes a few special tools – mainly unbiased, quality analytics.

This means that the entity that provides that data is as important as the data itself. And choosing a provider is an important internal

process. When your team does the legwork of evaluating and vetting data providers, you'll gain valuable internal buy-in that makes a transition to the new rules of modern shipping that much easier. Plus the vetting process will provide ample cost justification to managers for new data analysis tools.

**Time to get into the nuts and bolts. How do you find the right data provider for your team and get leadership buy-in?**



# Choosing the right provider

**From a shipper's perspective, only three things in life are guaranteed: death, taxes, and freight market uncertainty.**

That means implementing data-driven decision-making across the supply chain is critical to planning for the road ahead. However, leveraging internal data alone isn't enough to help shippers navigate evolving spot and contract rates, demand volatility, supply chain disruptions, mini-bids, and carrier relationships effectively.

**After all, if data is king, context is its queen. Both are essential to success.**

Partnering with third-party analytics providers helps shippers to augment their internal data with freight market intelligence to get real-time visibility into how their networks are performing.

Armed with an optimal balance of external and internal insights, shipping leaders can make proactive decisions

around contract negotiations, cost cutting, budget performance, capacity management, risk mitigation, carrier relationships, and benchmark reporting.

Selecting the right freight analytics provider is a critical decision. A reliable freight analytics provider should not only deliver actionable insights, but also empower you to optimize your logistics operations and gain market advantage over industry competitors. Of course, there are a number of freight analytics providers with different capabilities, specializations, and objectives — and choosing the right one is critical to success. During the provider assessment process, as with any other IT investment, shippers should prioritize value and transparency.

How do you find the right data and analysis partner?

# Selection criteria

You'll start with a solid rubric by which you'll evaluate potential data partners. The ways a potential partner might interact with the tools you have, how it will grow with your business, the company behind the tool, and the ease of use are critical considerations.

Smart teams will have their own criteria to whittle down choices.

We'd encourage you to consider the following:

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## Integration with existing systems

Seamless integration with current IT infrastructure ensures minimal disruption and maximum efficiency.

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## Scalability and flexibility

Solutions that scale with business growth and adapt to changing market conditions.

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## Provider's experience and expertise

Deep industry knowledge and a track record of delivering actionable insights.

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## Accessibility of data and insights

User-friendly platforms that enable stakeholders to derive value from data effortlessly. This typically falls into one or more of three categories:

- **Validation:** You'll need visibility for real-time transactional ratings, keeping partners in check, monitoring freight costs, and other cross-functional needs.
- **Optimization:** A strong data provider empowers you to study trend and root-cause analysis for identifying lane and carrier-level optimization opportunities. You'll improve outcomes for your organization and your customers.
- **Planning:** Comprehensive rate and capacity visibility drives smart planning. Data visualizations enable clear communication with executive teams, prove the value of investment, and demonstrate performance quickly.

# A bit about DAT

While we're talking shop about data and analysis providers, we'd be remiss to not mention our own data and analysis tool for shippers: DAT iQ.

DAT iQ's freight market intelligence data delivers impactful business insights on rates, capacity, performance, and more. DAT iQ is:

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## Integrated and comprehensive

With data from over \$1T in real freight transactions and market insights on virtually every lane in North America, DAT delivers more data than any other platform on the market – no proxies, no bias.

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## Experienced and specialized

Since 1978, DAT has been the trusted source for freight market intelligence and data insights. Today, DAT serves a broad range of global leaders, from Fortune 10 enterprises to Fortune 500 innovators – including 13 of Gartner's Top 25 Supply Chains.

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## Ready to scale

DAT serves shippers of every size in every sector, from manufacturing, retail, and consumer packaged goods to wholesale trade, chemical production, and more.

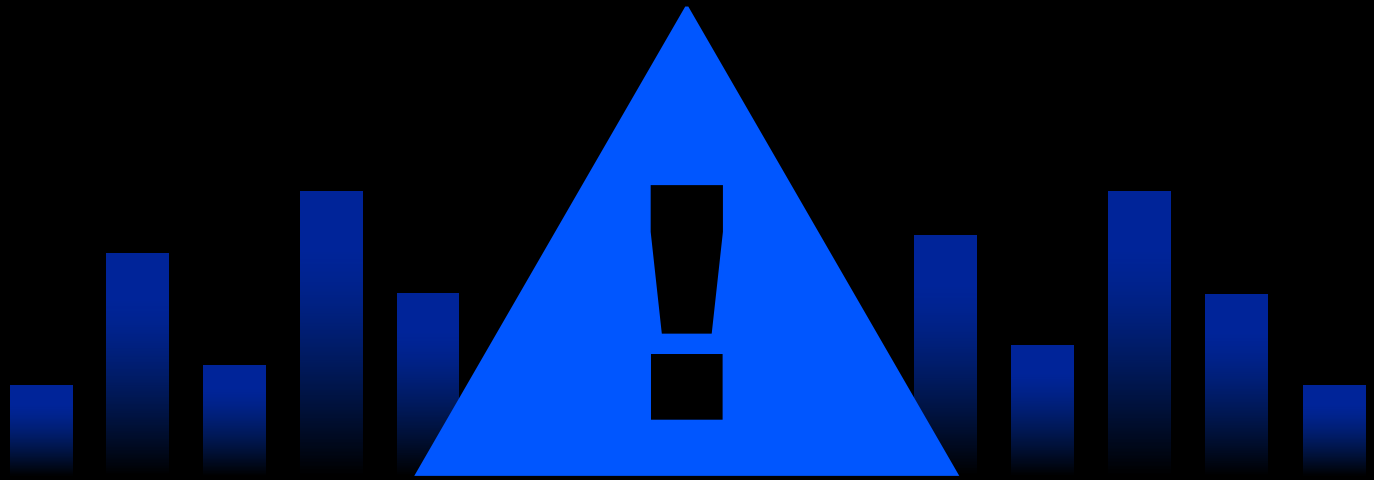
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## Transparent

Data sits at the heart of DAT's business, so we understand the importance of being open and honest about our processes.



Our purpose is to take the guesswork out of logistics by empowering shippers with the most accurate information. Comparing your network against hundreds of leading North American shippers, our solutions deliver a 360-degree view of the marketplace that helps take the uncertainty out of freight.



# **Bad data = bad decisions**

**In today's market, unreliable data isn't just risky — it's costly. Shippers need trusted, verifiable insights to defend budgets, strengthen negotiations, and steer strategy with confidence.**

If you're relying only on internal data—or data built on proxies and models—you're missing the full picture. Without verified, invoice-level insights, it's impossible to know whether your budgets, benchmarks, or sourcing decisions are grounded in reality.

Reliable, neutral data gives you the confidence to make defensible choices, identify opportunities, and prove value across your organization. DAT delivers that advantage through transaction-verified intelligence contributed by and validated with hundreds of shippers, brokers, and carriers.

# Building a business case for new tools



## **Once a provider is selected, building a compelling business case becomes crucial for securing internal buy-in and investment.**

Understanding your internal purchasing committee, aligning metrics with business objectives, and effectively leveraging data to quantify ROI are essential steps in this process.

When margins are tight, securing essential resources can be an uphill climb. Storytelling through effective value-framing is the key to getting buy-in.

It requires a firm understanding of which benchmarking metrics showcase value in ways that resonate with the differing priorities of buying teams. Learning to speak the language of stakeholders simplifies your job.

Keep the following areas of focus in mind when making a business case for freight analytics.

# Quantify ROI and cost savings

Freight costs represent a major share of operating expenses, increasingly raising red flags at the executive level. 71% percent of CFOs are highly or somewhat concerned about freight and logistics costs\*, making it essential for transportation leaders to clearly articulate the ROI of any new technology or analytics investment.

## Securing funding for new tools means showing measurable impact.

Freight analytics and benchmarking can pinpoint where money is being left on the table and where targeted action can deliver tangible savings. That insight not only supports budget defense, but also positions you as a strategic partner to finance and the broader business.

Analyzing historical and market data helps identify inefficiencies, optimize lane

performance, and negotiate smarter with carriers. The result: lower costs, stronger margins, and more defensible decisions.

Since cost optimization opportunities are now table stakes, the most effective business cases go beyond line-item savings to demonstrate strategic value, such as defending spend, reducing financial risk, and improving planning accuracy. Benchmarking provides the context to compare your logistics costs and service performance against peers, so you can quantify how efficiency gains translate into financial results.

Market intelligence doesn't just validate rates — it helps uncover underperforming areas of your network, revealing where strategic changes can reduce spend and strengthen resilience.

\*Source: Gartner, "Market Guide for Benchmarking Services for Transportation Rates and Logistics Performance," 7/22/25

**5-15%**  
**TRANSPORTATION  
COST SAVINGS**

In a recent poll of DAT iQ Benchmark shipper customers, half reported at least a 5% transportation cost savings over the past 12 months – and a fifth of customers report a 10-15% savings.

# Address relevant pain points

To secure buy-in for new technology or process improvements, you need to anchor your business case in the challenges that matter most to your decision-makers. For shippers, the most compelling stories translate transportation performance into outcomes that finance, procurement, and leadership all care about — cost efficiency, risk mitigation, and scalability.

**On average,  
major supply chain  
disruptions occurs every**

**3.7  
YEARS**

Source: McKinsey

Rather than focusing solely on tactical benefits, connect your pitch to broader business impacts that underscore the value and return on what might otherwise be viewed as additional expenditures.

**Outcomes like improving forecast accuracy, building agility against macro disruptions, and strengthening supplier relationships to enhance service reliability benefit the organization as a whole.**

Framing your proposal this way turns transportation optimization from a “cost project” into a strategic growth initiative.

These aren’t hypothetical benefits — shippers are already proving what’s possible. For example, Freshpet faced rising transportation costs, inconsistent service, and mounting pressure from leadership to modernize its logistics operations. By aligning transportation, procurement, and finance teams around a single source of truth through DAT iQ, the company reduced transportation costs from 10-11% to about 4% of net sales and improved on-time delivery performance to more than 95% across major retail customers.

That level of alignment didn’t just improve operations — it built credibility with finance and leadership, making the case for continued investment in data-driven decision-making clear. Use examples like Freshpet’s success story to bring your business case to life.

# How to get the C-suite's attention with freight analytics



## Now more than ever, supply chain performance is under the C-suite's microscope.

Rising transportation costs and market uncertainty have elevated freight from a tactical line item to a strategic priority – and, if leveraged thoughtfully, a driver of growth, customer value, and competitive advantage.

**According to Descartes' 2025 Benchmark Survey, 81% of companies now view transportation as a competitive differentiator** – and those leaders are more likely to achieve more than 5% annual growth. This shift reflects a growing recognition that

strategic freight management doesn't just reduce spend – it enables smarter planning, stronger supplier partnerships, and improved customer experience.

For shippers, that means reframing transportation conversations with executives. It's not just about rate negotiations or carrier performance – it's about demonstrating how data-driven freight decisions protect margins, support growth initiatives, and enhance organizational agility in a volatile market.

# Remind your decision-makers that unbiased data and analysis tools will help them:

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## Synchronize fulfillment and returns

This will help preserve brand loyalty, a critical undertaking considering 43% of customers have canceled a contract due to poor service.

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## Maintain consistent on-time deliveries

This is table stakes for shippers looking to improve customer experiences. In fact, businesses with more satisfied customers often see increases in overall sales revenue profitability.

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## Create flexible, just-in-time delivery capabilities

It's an easy way to minimize out-of-stocks caused by rapid demand swings. During the pandemic, out-of-stocks associated with consumer panic-buying accounted for nearly \$3B in lost sales across 10 CPG categories.

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## See real-time, end-to-end visibility

Empowers shippers to adapt to unexpected disruptions and hand-off delays caused by severe weather events (which cost transportation companies \$3.5B annually).

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## Bring everyone together

Being on the same page reduces that fatiguing time-to-decision. With one source of truth, teams make faster, informed decisions together.

# What's next?

**DAT iQ provides comprehensive visibility into the freight market, equipping shippers with the reliable insights they need to navigate uncertainty. Continuous improvement and leveraging data-driven insights will be key in navigating market volatility and driving sustainable growth in the evolving procurement landscape.**

**To align with the latest data insights and benchmarks, leverage DAT iQ's capabilities for a comprehensive view of the marketplace so you can navigate uncertainties effectively. With over \$150 billion in average annual contributed spend data, DAT iQ empowers businesses with actionable intelligence to optimize freight strategies and drive competitive advantage.**

Learn more: [www.DAT.com/iQ](http://www.DAT.com/iQ)



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